

SCHOONER ERNESTINA COMMISSION (SEC)

Meeting Minutes

Monday September 15, 2014

Meeting Location: New Bedford National Historic Park
33 William Street, New Bedford MA

In Attendance:

Commissioners: Laura Pires-Hester, Steve Walsh, Fred Sterner, Brian Rothschild, Karl Pastore. (Gene Monteiro was unable to attend, and would try to call in.) Chiara Palazzolo, Liaison to SEC from New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park

MA Representative: Antonio F.D.Cabral

MA Dept. of Conservation and Recreation (DCR): Commissioner Jack Murray, Samantha Schusterman, Tony Barletta, Jason Silva

SEMA: Julius Britto, Mary Anne McQuillan
Volunteers: Rick Porteus

Meeting Called to Order at 1:00 pm

Chairperson welcomed everyone to the meeting and asked that attendees introduce themselves. She thanked Commissioner Murray and his staff for attending, and also later State Representative Cabral. She asked that the review and approval of the Minutes of the August 11, 2014 Meeting be done later in the meeting; that was agreed upon by Commissioners.

1. Commissioner Murray was asked to bring an update on the Ernestina restoration:
 - Bids close today 9/15/14 at 5 pm.
 - Bids will be opened tomorrow morning
 - Restoration project was put out under the open procurement process because this is a government contract. This means that depending on who gets the bid, the vessel may be restored outside of MA.
 - The bid date was pushed out 2 weeks due to the Q&A conducted; this gave all bidders sufficient time to distill the information and apply it to their bid.
 - Re-affirming the vote on the name change would be a good thing. In this process, he had had many conversations with others, including Representative Cabral and Senator Mark Montigny's offices and the Cape Verdean Consul General; and he was also aware of some concern in Gloucester that the restoration be done within MA.
 - The Commission has about \$ 6.3 million to put towards the restoration; hopefully bids will fall within this amount.
2. Chairperson Pires-Hester shared copies of a news article "Feedback from Gloucester" about location concerns. She stated that the Commission would be voting today to re-affirm the name change from *Ernestina* to *Ernestina-Morrissey* (with a hyphen [-]), reminding the body that the previous vote had been unanimous except for Commissioner Walsh's abstention until he could confirm it officially with the Commissioner of MOTT and also that Commissioner Monteiro might be able to call in today. She opened the floor for discussion and invited Representative Cabral to comment first.

3. Representative Cabral discussed his concerns regarding the last Commission meeting and his suggestions about how to move forward. He reminded the Commission about the Commission enabling legislation, crafted in his office, which made the SEC the "governing body." He was therefore concerned that the name change was indeed what the Commission wanted. He therefore wanted to pose several questions that should be carefully considered.
 - What role will the Schooner Ernestina Commission take on in the future? Advisory Role? He reminded Commissioners that only it can enter into any Memorandum of Understanding.
 - What role will MA Maritime have beyond maintenance? Training? The vessel should not be used just for training, but for educational purposes to show the evolution of fishing operations over time, from a Fishing Schooner to now.
 - When and where will the ship be stationed? For how long? The home port of the vessel is non-negotiable.
 - Millions have been secured by Rep. Cabral's office and because so much effort has been expended, the future of the vessel is important. The vessel was a gift entrusted to the city New Bedford from the people of Cape Verde. The future of the vessel needs to be secured, particularly since it is still on "his watch".
 - The 2008 Bond Bill has now been released.
 - Be cautious; before any transfer takes place be sure to have in writing the roles, responsibilities, and expectations of each party.
 - Mr. Lenfest has provided a generous sum of 1.8 million but his money is conditional, i.e. the name of the vessel.
 - Mr. Hildreth has also provided a generous sum, with no requirements.
 - Regarding the name change of the vessel, he as Chairman and Senator Montigny (?) were disappointed not to be part of the process, and glad to see that another vote on the name change will be conducted. He was also concerned that the Open Meeting Law was not followed correctly.
 - New Bedford and New Bedford inhabitants have a responsibility to the vessel and to the Cape Verdeans.
 - The Commission should have continued involvement regarding the vessel's mission. The mission benefits Cape Verdeans, the region and the state.
 - The DCR Commissioner cannot speak for the Commission, unless the Commission grants him that authority.
 - Suggested recommendation to the SEC: don't give up your position to influence the future of the vessel. The future of the vessel needs to be secured, particularly since it is still on "his watch".
 - Written notification of the vote results must be sent to the Chairman
 - Chairman has set up a meeting with the Admiral of MA Maritime, adding that MA Maritime should "come to the table" with additional monies.
4. Commissioner Jack Murray added the following thoughts and reminders:
 - Contingent to Coast Guard taking on the vessel's maintenance is that it must be made "sea worthy" first and meet the minimum requirements of sea worthy.
 - The Commission has at least 2 years to plan for the vessel's future while it is being restored.
 - It is estimated that the vessel's maintenance will cost 1-2 million per year.
5. Ms. Pires-Hester thanked Representative Cabral for his attendance and for his suggestions. She also responded that it was unfortunate that this long process regarding the name change had been necessary, and also that some of the Representative's questions were indeed questions that the Commission has previously discussed. She shared also the Commission had no intention of bypassing the Open Meeting Law as it was understood, and that steps are being taken now that

Proposed Agendas and Approved Minutes are posted throughout the State's procedures. Notice of today's Vote results will also be provided to the offices of Representative Cabral and Senator Mark Montigny. She then asked Commissioners and visitors for comments.

6. Mr. Rothschild reflected his thoughts regarding the discussion:
 - The Commission should draft future role of all parties, addressing mission of the vessel and concerns of Rep Cabral. Commission should formalize relationship with MA maritime.
 - Brian also recommended developing an outline that specifies mission/responsibilities of both Commission and MA Maritime.
7. Mr. Pastore agreed that the name change was a good and positive thing and that we should move forward on the resolution. He also agreed that MA Maritime should be brought to the table to jointly discuss the future of the vessel.
8. Mr. Sterner stated that the name of the vessel should be changed regardless of whether we get Mr. Lenfast's money or not.
9. Mr. Walsh agreed that the name change was a good thing moving forward.
10. Mr. Britto shared his experiences with the "Freedom Fighters" in Cabo Verde in the 1970's and also supported the name change whether or not Mr Lenfest provides the money.
11. Mr. Porteus provided his thoughts.
 - Very few ships exist of this magnitude.
 - Commission should see its role as maximized, not diminished. Lots of possibilities are opening up for the Commission.
 - Each entity should write down what they are contributing as Rep. Cabral and Commissioner Rothschild had stated.
 - Keep your eye on the completion; you have the pedigree.
12. Ms. McQuillan provided an article on the ranking of restored ships. The Ernestina ranks fourth after the *Constitution*, *Olympia*, and *Constellation*.
13. Ms. Pires-Hester agreed that the commission should outline the nature of the partnership, and must be involved in discussions with MA Maritime. Commissioner Murray has been in agreement with that. She also asked that Representative Cabral share his own discussion with MA Maritime.
14. Ms. Pires-Hester then asked for a motion for the Proposed Resolution:

That the Schooner Ernestina Commission supports the change of Schooner Ernestina's name to Ernestina-Morrissey, as she moves forward into her next diverse and illustrious life.
15. The motion was made by _____ and seconded by _____. It was approved unanimously.
16. Mr. Rothschild then made a motion that future roles of the commission be outlined; it was seconded by Mr. Pastore. The motion was also approved.
17. Ms. Pires-Hester stated that at the next meeting, to be scheduled as soon as the bid/approval process is complete, we will also discuss the ship send-off and possible Reception that has been discussed tentatively between SEC, SEMA, and DCR. The subsequent meeting would be reserved to discuss the outline.
18. Mr. Britto provided the SEMA report.
 - SEMA will be participating in the Blessing of the Fleet, which will take place on the Schooner; this is a good opportunity to promote and share an update on Ernestina.
19. Mr. Pastore reported on the condition of the mast, how it was replaced and that the old mast was sliced into several pieces to be used as a fund raising event. He will look into "clearing state surplus" process and requirements. The pieces must show a "chain of custody." Mast came from a white pine from Mohawk state forest in 1994. Additional fundraising options include the older pieces of the boat that will be produced during the restoration. Contract should contain a clause which states

that all scrap pieces of the boat generated by the ship yard, are to be returned back to the Commission.

20. Ms. Pires-Hester recommended that, whatever the details, that a "major" product (table, or chair, or ???) would be available for what might be a "significant" auction price and that "smaller" (bar, plaque, ??) products be available for broader purchase.
21. Mr. Silva stated that all repairs need to be approved by the Commission.
22. Ms. Pires-Hester stated that meeting notes needed to reflect that: regarding the restoration and shipyard selection, the Commission understands "best value" and the definition of "best value," but wants the possibility of promoting the vessel as part of expanding visibility, so that interpretation and promotion potential should be maximized. In this way, work integrity is balanced with taxpayer investment.
23. Mr. Walsh motioned that the previous meeting minutes be accepted. Mr. Pastore and Mr. Sterner seconded the motion. The motion was approved.
24. Mr. Silva advised that the commission should adopt as practice the attorney general regulations.
25. Ms. Pires-Hester recommended that the next meeting be held on October 27 but that an additional meeting would need to be set up a day before the ship send-off. She then motioned to adjourn the meeting and it was seconded by Mr. Walsh.

Respectfully Submitted,
Ms. Chiara Palazzolo, Acting Superintendent
New Bedford Whaling National Historical Park